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UNCLAS LIMA 004784

SIPDIS

SENSITIVE

FOR DS/IP/WHA AND DS/DSS/ITA

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: ASEC PE

SUBJECT: AID CONTRACTORS ABDUCTED AND RELEASED BY SENDERO LUMINOSO

¶1. Summary: On Sunday, November 6, 2005, 10 employees of AID alternative development contractor, Chemonics, were abducted and briefly held by a heavily armed group of Sendero Luminoso operatives near the village of Santa Rosa de Yanajanca, in the department of San Martin. After being forced to meet with a community group and answer questions about their alternative development work, the abductors threatened to kill the group if they returned to the area. The employees were released unharmed 5 hours later. End summary.

¶2. At 0940 hours on Sunday, November 6, 2005, 10 employees of AID alternative development contractor, Chemonics, were abducted by a group of 10 heavily armed individuals as they were waiting to cross a river to the village of Santa Rosa de Yanajanca, in the upper Huallaga valley department of San Martin. The Chemonics employees were in the area to meet with community members of a neighboring village regarding the alternative development program.

¶3. After tying their hands, the abductors transported the group to the nearby village of Santa Rosa de Yanajanca, where they were taken to a local school and forced to answer questions regarding their alternative development work in front of community members. The abductors demanded the Chemonics employees cease all AD work in the region and threatened to kill them if they returned to the area. After stealing Chemonics equipment including radios, cellphones, and cameras, the abductors reportedly planned to set the Chemonics vehicles on fire but were persuaded by community members not to do so, for fear of reaction by the Peruvian National Police. At approximately 1445 hours, the group was released unharmed and made their way back to the Chemonics office in Tocache.

¶4. RSO Comment: The area in which the abduction took place is within the Embassy's restricted travel zone, and is a known area of operation for the SL. In April of this year, 3 helicopters of the Embassy's Narcotics Affairs Section, operated by Peruvian Police, came under attack while parked on a riverbed not far from where the abduction took place. In July, 2 PNP officers and a justice of the peace were killed nearby when their vehicle was ambushed by armed assailants.

STRUBLE